

5657

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE IN FULL 1993

15 September 1961

CIVIL DEFENSE IN THE USSR

I. An active program in civil defense has been under way in the USSR since about 1949.

- A. The program includes maintenance of a specialized civil defense staff, training for operative groups and for the general population, establishment of an alert system, publication of many manuals, film strips, moving pictures and periodicals, and a continued program in construction of shelter space.
- B. The USSR has thereby established a substantial lead over any of the Western Allies in organization, shelter space, and training of the populace.

II. The Soviet civil defense system has several distinguishing characteristics:

- A. Security precautions obscure many aspects, such as planning, the level of supply, and the capacity of available shelter.
- B. Until recently, public information played down weapons effects, probably to prevent alarm within the USSR.
- C. Civil defense service and training are compulsory for the Soviet citizen and for governmental and economic units.
- D. The USSR follows a system of priorities in civil defense preparations. The more important the city, factory, or other installation, the better the civil defense provisions.

III. The civil defense effort is highly organized, with the ultimate goal of obtaining the participation of every able-bodied citizen.

~~SECRET~~BEST COPY
AVAILABLE

- A. At all levels of government and in major factories there are full-time, specially trained, civil defense staff officers, part of a corps subordinate to a national civil defense headquarters. The headquarters has probably been under the Soviet Ministry of Defense since early 1950 (was under MVD until its abolition at national level)
 - B. Civil defense units are organized in cities and large factories using for their nuclei the peacetime police, fire departments, medical units, construction organizations, and the like.
 - C. New military or paramilitary units apparently are being created and organizations formed in rural areas and small towns to give additional civil defense aid to cities in an emergency.
- IV. Civil defense training is compulsory for all adults but the program has not been uniformly carried out.
- A. We estimate that at least 50 million to 80 million people have had some instruction in civil defense.
 - B. Civil defense training is included in the course of instruction for schools and technical schools, and at the college level.
 - C. Large factories and some cities have carried out periodic civil defense drills. It is known that sirens are in place and have been used in practice alerts in several cities. Air raid drills and specialized training for operative units have been conducted since 1957.
 - D. A civil defense institute is maintained in Leningrad to train members of the full time civil defense staff of the USSR.
- V. The USSR has been constructing air raid shelters since at least 1949.
- A. Basement shelters were used in World War II. By 1949 a policy of including shelter space in new masonry buildings was instituted. Hundreds of reports of such construction in the USSR have been received since 1950.

2
~~SECRET~~
~~SECRET~~

BEST COPY
AVAILABLE

5. The majority of shelters have been constructed in basements under new masonry buildings. The remainder consist of special underground shelters.

6. We estimate that current shelter capacity is sufficient for about 20 percent of the urban population.

7. There is some evidence that the program for construction of basement shelters has been reduced, but this development has coincided with increased sightings of detached shelters and with increased consideration of urban evacuation in the Soviet press.

VI. Soviet concepts of civil defense have been changing during the last three years, probably as a result of greater appreciation of the effects of large nuclear weapons.

A. Nonetheless, it is only recently (January 1961) that rather complete pictures of the effects of large thermonuclear weapons have appeared in the Soviet civil defense press -- major buildings destroyed to 23 miles, dangerous fallout extending to 255 miles, perhaps necessitating long stays in air raid shelters.

B. It is not yet clear what impact the new concepts are having on the civil defense program at large. Strategic evacuation of cities was introduced into training literature in 1958. Instructions now state that if long warning time is achieved, non-workers will be resettled in rural areas and small towns. Perhaps fewer, but better shelters will be built in urban areas, with preparations to be made for the countryside to receive and shelter urban evacuees.